

Now, in this state we can count on about 135,000 year around farm workers; that sounds like an average of one worker per farm, but this is very misleading; actually these steady workers are highly bunched in certain types of farming operations you'll find them largely in dairying, grain, and things like this, rather than in fruits or vegetables, in these seasonal crops at harvest time we need approximately 250,000 temporary workers. Before World War 2, we were able to get all our crops harvested quite efficiently by dependending entirely on the free flow of labor principally from Mexico and from the Southwest; we had some regulars coming in from places even farther away, such as Florida, and North and South Dakota. Well, now, ~~due~~ due to a number of factors, we can no longer rely on this flow of labor; for one thing the free movement of workers to and from Mexico has been cut off by the Immigration people; for another thing 3 or 4 per cent of our domestic seasonal farm workers move out of farm work every year on the average, ^W We do our best to recruit domestic workers. As you drive along the highways of this state you must have noticed the green and white signs as you approach each town, ~~signs~~ signs reading, "Farm Labor Information" and then they give a street address; I believe that the Farm Placement Service maintains regular offices in every town

Fred Heringer
Oct. 19, 1957

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with over 25,000 population, and during harvest seasons they maintain a number of temporary offices in addition.

But, in spite of these efforts we aren't able to attract and hold enough domestics to do the work that need to be done, so we bring in off-shore labor from Japan, the Phillipines, Puerto Rico, Jamaica, and Mexico. We bring these people in under strict controls, and these people are better off than they have ever been before. In California, last year, ~~were~~ at the peak, we had 112,000 aliens in farm labor; in the country as a whole, at the peak there were only 255,000 foreign contract laborers, this is out of a total of 5 million farm workers, approximately 5 per cent; so, you can see that, relatively speaking, the numbers involved are not so very large. The percentage of ~~for~~ foreign workers is also going to decline next year; every responsible person that I have talked with agrees on this. This winter, for example, it has been laid down as practically an ironclad policy that there will be no nationals in all of California north of Bakersfield. You see, what we do is get together with representatives of the Farm Placement Service and we estimate our needs alongside of estimations of the number of domestics who are going to be available, we don't just go on the basis of past experience, we have to make predictions of the future, taking into account such things as trends in the national economy. Now, at the moment, there's a down turn in the national economy, we aren't talking about this for public consumption because we don't want to have any part of contributing to a panic, but, we are well aware of the fact that there are being lay-offs in the aircraft industry; there is a big slow down in home building; and so, we can count on there being more domestics available for farm work this coming year than there has been for several years past.

We have to plan ahead like this because if we don't we can really wind up in the hole. Domestic workers can jump around at will, they can go wherever they want and whenever they want, and whenever and wherever they show up they have to be employed; and if they displace a crew of Mexican-Nationals that were brough in just the day before, that's too darn bad; the domestics only stay for the height of the crop and then they move on to skim the cream off ~~of~~ somewhere else; we don't think it is fair, but under the existing law there is nothing that we can do about it. I know, doggone good and well, that this sort of thing is happening every day, it happens on my on place, it happens all throughout the valley.

Housing
Fred Heringer
Oct. 19, 1957

As far as the compliance angle is concerned, the State Division of Housing is responsible for inspecting both the labor camps for domestics and foreign workers. It is important to note that they have precisely the same standards for both camps; it is true that there is a set of Federal regulations for Mexican-National housing, but since this was patterned almost exactly along the lines of the California code it all amounts to the same thing. Now, I daresay, that it may be true that the Division of Housing inspectors spend more of their time proportionately inspecting ~~hosing~~ housing for nationals than for domestics because of the fact that the law says that you can't have a single Mexican worker until the facilities have been approved, there is no corresponding law for certification of domestic housing.

I believe that the Division of Housing has 28 inspectors, and I understand that there are something like 7,500 labor camps in the state, they also have other duties as well, so, we understand fully that these fellows are overworked. I will say this, that there are only about 60 prime contractors of Mexican-Nationals in the state, these are the labor associations who have large centralized camps; it is practically impossible to contract Mexican-Nationals nowadays unless you are a member of one of these associations; well, it's not so tough for the inspectors to keep

track of just 60 camps, if there is any trouble, it arises when the associations send out the nation~~als~~ to individual growers, ^Efor example, there are 700 growers in the Marysville area who maintain their own small camps. The California Farm Bureau Federation has a position on the question of investigators for the Division of Housing, at the last session of the Legislature, somebody introduced a bill appropriat^ring funds for five additional inspectors; our group supported this bill, it passed one of the Houses, I am not sure about the other, but I assume that there are now 33 inspectors rather than the 28 I mentioned a moment ago.

Housing

QUESTION:

ANSWER:

How about the Japanese Program?

The Japanese Program was started for one reason and one reason only, I happen to be a member of the Secretary of Labor's Advisory Committee on foreign labor, and periodically we meet with representatives of the Mexican Government to discuss our mutual aims. Now, a few years ago, I was at one of these meetings which was held at Memphis, Tennessee, the representatives of Mexico at that conference told us that the Mexican Government was spending millions on water development projects and the like, which would open up tremendous areas of Mexico and make them profitable farming land. These men told us that these projects meant that in the foreseeable future the Bracero Program might have to be abandoned, furthermore, we hear periodical complaints from Mexican employers that they can't get enough workers ^{due} ~~to~~ to the Bracero Program; well, we listened to these complaints with a sympathetic ear, we know how these fellows feel because we have been in the same boat ourselves. Well, these are the reasons why we thought that it would be a good idea to look around and see if ~~there~~ there were any other places we could get workers in case the Mexican program had to be closed down. At the present time, I believe, there are 1,019 Japanese in the state; they are here under six months contracts which can be extended up to a total of 3 years. There are the same provisions and guarantees and protections that there are in

Fred Heinger
Oct. 19, 1957

Foreign
Labor,
General

ANSWER:
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the Mexican program, for example, it is not permissible to use Japanese if domestics are available in the area; if something unfortunate were to occur the Japanese could be sent home at anytime and simply be reimbursed for 75 per cent of whatever remained of their six months contract; because of this 3 year ~~period~~ period which I mentioned as the maximum, a lot of people seem to assume that these are 3 year contracts, but they are not.

There is one aspect of this Japanese Program that you may be interested in, the Japanese agency which administers the program from that end of the line insists that we educate the Japanese worker on the American way of life, democracy and so forth; we are going even farther than that, the California Farm Bureau Federation has on its books a resolution that, when possible Japanese workers will be taken to the agriculture college at Davis during the slack winter months for instruction in farming techniques.

QUESTION:

How about the Filipino Program?

ANSWER:

Only one plane load of Filipinos ever came in, then the program hit a snag. The government of the Philippines had some reservations which haven't been solved yet. I believe that there are only 19 workers in the state ~~the~~ at the present time under the Filipino Program.

Why can't farmers get enough domestics to do the work?

The California Farm Bureau Federation has always been interested in this question, we support anybody who is doing research and trying to answer the question; for example, we supported the study which was conducted by the ^{Giannini} Foundation right here in Santa Clara County a couple ~~x~~ of years ago. We have always been anxious to learn what it is that the domestics want, what do we need to offer them in order to have them come in and take responsible positions; this is all that we ask, you see, is responsible workers; so we wonder do they want Social Security, do they want Unemployment Insurance, exactly what do they want? I will give you my ~~own~~ impression, I can't speak for the Farm Bureau Federation on this, although their attitude probably ~~it~~ wouldn't be much different; it seems to me that ~~since~~ we must be ~~able~~ to offer a guarantee of a certain minimum amount of employment

Fred Heringer
Oct. 19, 1957

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during the year, we can't attract the responsible type of domestic that we are looking for if all that we are able to offer is scattered crop activities which last only a week or two. The California Farm Bureau Federation has a couple of proposals, for one thing it proposes a modification of the labor contractor system with the crew leader to be called a supervisor rather than a contractor, this man would stay with the crew all the time rather than only during one particular type of crop such as cotton or peaches; we feel ~~ix~~ that with such a system it would be possible to keep the crews employed almost all year since there is some crop coming into maturity in California during practically every month. Another proposal that we make has to do with 'incentive pay', we are interested in worker productivity and we think it is only ~~fair~~ ^{fair} that pay be according to productivity; most agriculture and agricultural wages are presently geared to the least efficient worker, we would like to see pay geared to actual production and this is dependent upon a number of things. It is not entirely a matter of the amount of effort the worker puts out, although this is the most important single factor, there's the size of the fruit, the size of the tree, how heavily the crop is set, and so forth and so on. Dr. Roy Smith, dean at UCLA, has taken his sliderule and calculated units of production, taking into account these sorts of factors, 21 different factors in all, I believe. It's a crude system to pay on the basis of a box since a box may represent 5 minutes work or 2 hours work; so now, down in the citrus industry they are paying on the basis of Dr. Smith's units of production. The citrus industry is ahead of the rest of us in this respect and in my opinion, this is the reason that the citrus industry has less trouble with labor than any other.

QUESTION

Isn't it ~~true~~ ^u that housing for domestics is generally worse than housing for nationals, and isn't this one of the major reasons why domestics won't stay in farm labor?

ANSWER:

I doubt very much that housing is a crucial consideration. I can show you industrial workers who are living in \$1500 houses as well as \$15,000

ANSWER:
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houses; the ones who are living in \$1500 houses are as badly off as anybody living in a farm labor camp, but I don't see them ~~living~~ leaving industry on this account. Furthermore, a sizable proportion of our labor comes from Day-haul Programs, and obviously, the question of camps for domestics isn't ~~relevant~~ to the Day-haul Programs at all.

QUESTION:

Mr. Andreas of the Fresno office of the Division of Housing said to me once, "If you, as Christian people want to do something ~~about~~ about the farm labor situation you will see that our staff is increased, even if that means ~~increasing~~ an increase in the taxes that you have to pay.", here would seem to be an opinion that ~~housing~~ ^{the} housing is crucial.

ANSWER:

Well, I don't dispute that a lot of the housing which is provided for domestics is in pretty ~~shoddy~~ sad shape, but, I would point out to you and to Mr. Andreas, that increasing taxes and increasing the number of inspectors isn't going to fully solve the problem, or perhaps, even solve more than a fraction of it. The big trouble is that it takes a million dollars, more or less, to put in a really top flight camp of any size and you are simply not going to find very many farmers who are millionaires and who are able to afford this kind of ~~outlay~~ ^{outlay}.

I have one more thing I would like to say on this matter of domestic housing, if you really go out and look into the matter you will find that most people live in these shanty towns because they want to, they could just as easily live somewhere else, and they could just as easily help keep up the places where they are now living. It is simply a matter of having low standards and values that are different from yours and mine; you can increase the size of you staff of inspectors all you want to and it is not going to do a particle of good so long as you are dealing with these people. I have won more hats than ~~you can~~ I can remember from inspectors who have worked in my area, they would come around and say to me

ANSWER:
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that I had to put up screen doors on the toilets, and dining halls, and bunk houses, and so forth; I would say to them, "All right, I'll do what you say, but I'll bet you a hat that if I do, by the next time you come around they'll be punched full of holes or else they'll be completely knocked ~~down~~ out.". I have never yet lost one of these bets, the trouble is that I have never been able to collect on one either. Let me give you another example, just last week, I was ~~xxx~~ talking to a fellow who was living in a cabin in one of the domestic camps up around ~~E~~ Yuba City, he was lying there on the bed and all around him was absolute filth, I suggested in the most tactful way that I could that it might be a good idea if he swept up some of the filth and threw it out; he just kept lying there and looked up at me and said, "I'm happy the way I am, if you don't like it why don't you sweep it up." That's the way it is, these are a different class of people, and so far as I can see you aren't going to be able to change them. If I am not mistaken in the Bible, somewhere, it says "The poor you will always have with you."

QUESTION:

Fred Heringer
Oct. 19, 1957
Labor movement

Labor
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I come from Georgia, in my hometown they have an automobile assembly plant, a few years ago the union moved into this plant; the newspapers and everybody else threw up their hands in horror and said it meant the end of everything, they predicted that the industry wouldn't be able to continue, and would have to close down and move somewhere else, and wouldn't this be a terrible thing for the entire area. Well, none of these dire predictions came true, everything worked out all right and the area is as prosperous as ever, if not more so. Now, my question is why can't the same benefits be offered to locals as to nationals? The growers claim that unionization in agriculture is impossible, that farmers would have to go out of business, but having studied both rather carefully, I can say that the contract that the Mexican-National receives is a better and stronger contract as far as the worker is concerned than the contracts that the men in this ~~the~~ automobile plant received from the United Auto

~~Worker~~

ADDITIONAL QUESTION:
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Workers' Union. Both Mexicans and Japanese, for example, are getting better health insurance provisions than most unions and they are both getting, in effect, a guarantee annual wage that is assurance of 75 per cent working time or the equivalent; if work is not available; ~~this is~~ this is something that the labor unions in industry are just starting to talk about, as a matter of fact the Japanese are getting what amounts to a ~~guarant~~ guaranteed 3 year wage, this is way beyond anything that Walter Reuther has ever mentioned yet.

ANSWER :

Let me just say a couple of things regarding your question, first, I would ask you if organized labor is ready to recognize the tremendous responsibilities that it must assume in order to match the tremendous risks that the employer is making, the ~~the~~ Mexicans and Japanese must take these responsibilities, in other words, the employer has absolute assurance that they will show up for work where and when required and will work as long as required and will work faithfully. Furthermore, I ~~mean~~ would point out to you that the phrase "guaranteed annual wage" is really not appropriate in connection with these programs; it is true as you point out that ~~there~~ there is a guarantee of a certain amount of working time, but this is not the same thing as a guarantee of wages nothing is said in the contract about wages, there is no wage floor. The Mexican-National has no assurance that he'll return to Mexico after six weeks or however long his contract runs with any certain amount of money, the reason, of course, is that most of the work performed by these nationals is piece work and the amount of ~~the~~ money that they'll make under these circumstances depends, of course, upon how good the crop is and how much they are willing to put out. Finally, let me just say this, the manufacturer of automobiles that you were talking ~~about~~ about, is dealing with a product which will keep indefinitely, whether it has already been assembled or whether the parts are still lying in his warehouse waiting to be assembled. We in agriculture are ~~not~~ in a totally different

ANSWER:
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position; we work with living things, growing things, things which change everyday, every hour of everyday, our product will not keep in the event there is a work stoppage, we can't store our product in a warehouse while we go through time consuming negotiations; this is the situation which has us over a barrel when it comes to labor, it also has us over a barrel when it comes to dealing with the canneries or the wholesalers who purchase our crops. We are in a defenseless position, we can't name a price that is higher than the purchases wants to pay, because we can't ~~rig~~ sit back and hold onto our product and force him to terms if he says, "I don't like you terms and I am not interested in buying your crop this year.", there is nothing ~~we~~ whatever we can do, our crops will simply rot in the fields. It is true that the processors have a good deal to lose by holding out this way particularly if all the farmers act together, which is difficult enough in itself to achieve, but if the cannery has something to lose, the farmer has everything to lose. The canneries maintain a certain amount of reserve stock from year to year, but the farmers entire stock is out there in the fields, furthermore, the canneries are in an infinitely superior bargaining position to the farmer, since they have usually got a diversified line of goods that they can offer to the public, let us just say that the peach growers of California were to band together some year and hold out for \$25 a ton more from the canneries, well, I should have said that this would require the peach growers of the whole country to band together because peaches are grown in many other states besides California. Well, here is what Del Monte's, or Libby's attitude is ~~is~~ going to be, they are going to say all right, if you want to play the game that way we'll show you, we just won't can any peaches this year, but don't worry about us, we'll make out all right. People are going to have to buy some kind of canned fruit and we'll still have our lines of canned pear, apricots, applesauce, pineapple, and so forth.

QUESTION:

Well, now this discussion of the canning industry interests me a good deal. The canning industry has pretty much the same problem ~~x~~ that the farmer does at a certain point; after the cannery has bought the farmer's produce~~x~~ and has got it stacked at the dock waiting to be hauled inside the plant, the cannery is in the defenseless position, as you call it, as far as organized labor is concerned; in other words there they are stuck with a highly perishable product and if labor chooses to ~~walk~~ walk out at this particular time they have got the cannery over a barrel; yet the canneries have almost entirely unionized labor, I believe. Do they have the same kind of trouble with labor responsibility and reliability that you seem to anticipate, as far as farm labor is concerned?

ANSWER:

The basic difference, well, there are many differences, but, the basic one is that the cannery is in a position to pass on increased costs of production to the consumer in the event that the union demands a wage increase; as I have already indicated to you, the farmer is in no such position, he sells almost none of his product directly to the public, he sells to middlemen and processors who can wait him out if it comes to a showdown. The consuming public can't very well wait out the canneries in case the canneries decide to ~~raise~~ raise their prices, because the public has to eat to live and usually keeps on hand only a reserve enough for a week or two.